



**SOCIAL ZONES
ARE ONE MANY
WAYS WE'RE
SUPPORTING OUR
BUSINESS
COMMUNITY'S
COVID-19
RECOVERY
EFFORTS**

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OUTDOOR ACTIVATION: SOCIAL ZONE

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

WHAT IS A SOCIAL ZONE?

A group of restaurants and/or bar businesses may – through a single coordinating organization such as a business association – apply for a permit from the City to set up a temporary “Social Zone” in the public right-of-way (street, sidewalk) or on City-owned property (parking lot, park, etc.).

Think of a Social Zone as a temporary repurposing of one of these spaces into an outdoor dining plaza or food court.

HOW CAN I APPLY FOR A SOCIAL ZONE?

Detailed information about the application process is available online at <https://bit.ly/32XqicT>.

The application should be submitted by a coordinating organization such as a business association. These attachments are required when applying:

- Layout plan (show traffic barriers, placement of tables and chairs, etc.) – can be an overhead photo, such as from Google Maps, with annotations
- Operations and maintenance plan – the City can provide examples
- Documentation of neighbor engagement – the City can provide guidance and a template

WHAT IS A SOCIAL DISTRICT?

A Social District is an area designated by the City Commission where alcoholic beverages sold by multiple qualified Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) licensees may be consumed by purchasers. Only contiguous licensees may participate in a district, and only after obtaining a Social District Permit from the MLCC. City Commission approval of each permit application is required before a permit may be issued by the MLCC.

The coordinating organization for a Social Zone may request to add an overlapping Social District, either coinciding with the initial Social Zone application process, or as an add-on to an existing Social Zone.

CAN I HAVE AN OUTDOOR AREA FOR USE BY MY BUSINESS ONLY?

Yes! An individual business may apply to temporarily use part of its parking lot or other outdoor space for outdoor seating based on its temporarily reduced occupancy and parking needs.

Detailed information about the application process is available online at <https://bit.ly/3brQQGU>.

In order to use this area for alcohol service, Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) permission is required.

WHO SUPPLIES EQUIPMENT LIKE TRAFFIC BARRIERS, TABLES, AND CHAIRS?

Subject to funding and equipment availability, the City may supply traffic barriers directly from its inventory or through a rental arrangement. If City-supplied equipment is unavailable, the coordinating organization may arrange for equipment rental directly, but delivery and placement must be coordinated with the Mobile GR Department to ensure public safety and to maintain functionality/connectivity of the transportation network. Tables, chairs, and related items such as planters and umbrellas typically are provided by the coordinating organization (may depend on availability of grant funding or business contributions) or by individual businesses.

WHO MAINTAINS THE AREA IN TERMS OF LITTER CONTROL, CLEANING, MONITORING, ETC.?

For a Social Zone (shared space), the coordinating organization is responsible for ensuring the social zone is regularly cleaned and sanitized, and that operations adhere to City requirements and permit conditions. Additionally, the coordinating organization facilitates communication among nearby businesses and with the City. The coordinating organization doesn't have to do this alone – responsibilities can be shared or rotated among nearby businesses – but it does need to make sure the work gets done.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS TO BUSINESSES?

For 2020, the City has waived application, permit, and inspection fees related to outdoor seating areas. Business costs may include the purchase of outdoor furniture (table, chair, umbrella, planter, etc.); labor for furniture set-up/removal; supplies and labor for regular cleaning/sanitizing of furniture and other high touch surfaces; furniture storage during the winter months; etc.

Please consult with your insurance agent about any additional costs related to listing the City as additionally insured on your general liability policy. The City is not responsible for the cost of any damage to furniture or other items.

Continuation of Social Zones, Social Districts, and fee waivers is not guaranteed in future years.